

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSC-01 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8261

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EGEN, BU

SUBJECT: BULGARIAN PARTY LEADERSHIP CHANGES

1. LATE AFTERNOON JULY 3 RADIO AND TV BEGAN READING PARTY

PLENUM REPORT ISSUED BY CC FOLLOWING MEETING SAME DAY.

CHANGES INCLUDED ADDING TWO FULL MEMBERS TO POLITBURO BRING-
ING TOTAL TO 12; DROPPING THREE POLITBURO CANDIDATE MEMBERS
AND NAMING FOUR NEW MEMBER, BRINGING TOTAL THIS GROUP TO
SEVEN AS OPPOSED TO SIX; AND RECOMMENDING TO NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY DISMISSAL OF MINISTER OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY KHRISTO
PANAYOTOV AND REPLACING HIM WITH GEORGI PANKOV.

2. ALEXANDER LILOV AND GRISHA FILIPOV, THE TWO NEW FULL

MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO, BOTH CAME OUT OF PARTY
SECRETARIAT AND HAVE BEEN SECRETARIES THERE. LILOV,
OF COURSE, IS THE IDEOLOGIST WHOSE ACTIVE ROLE IN THIS
FIELD DURING LAST YEAR NOT ONLY HERE BUT ABROAD MARKED
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HIM AS AN IMPORTANT PERSONAGE AND A YOUNG (1933) MAN ON

THE WAY UP. NONETHELESS, HIS ELEVATION TO FULL POLITBURO MEMBERSHIP CAME AS A SURPRISE. BORIS VELCHEV HAS BEEN CONSIDERED POLITBURO MEMBER WITH OVERALL IDEOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITIES. IT WOULD SEEM THAT LILOV'S ASCENDANCY AND HIS TALENTS MARKED HIM FOR THIS ROLE. FILIPOV IS AN ECONOMIST AND PLANNER WHO HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED IN THE PAST WITH ECONOMIC REFORM. WHETHER HIS APPOINTMENT AS POLITBURO MEMBER WILL HERALD SOME CHANGES IN ECONOMIC POLICY CANNOT BE PREDICTED SINCE HE HAS ALREADY BEEN IN KEY ECONOMIC POSITION. IF VELCHEV IS BEING CHALLENGED BY LILOV'S PROMOTION THEN IT MIGHT FOLLOW THAT PROFESSOR POPOV'S POSITION AS ECONOMIC CZAR IS SIMILARLY DIMINISHED, BUT THIS REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

3. THE CHANGES IN THE CANDIDATE POLITBURO MEMBERSHIP SO FAR AS THE DISMISSALS ARE CONCERNED REFLECT IDEOLOGICAL AND TRADE UNION PROBLEMS. IVAN ABADZIEV WAS THE IDEOLOGICAL EXPERT AND SUPPOSEDLY LILOV'S BOSS. VENELIN KOTSEV'S RESPONSIBILITIES ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE DEALT WITH PARTY DISCIPLINE AND IDEOLOGY ALSO FALLING WITHIN THE GENERAL AREA OF VELCHEV'S RESPONSIBILITIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, KOSTADIN GYAUROV'S RESPONSIBILITY HAS BEEN OVER ALL SUPERVISION OF TRADE UNIONS AND LABOR PRODUCTIVITY. THE LATTER AREA HAS BEEN CONTINUALLY POINTED TO AS SHOWING REAL WEAKNESS OF LATE RESULTING IN A WEAKENING OF THE ECONOMY.

4. THE NEW CANDIDATE POLITBURO MEMBERS, DOBRI DZUROV, MINISTER OF DEFENSE; PETUR MLADENOVS, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS; DRAZA VULCHEVA, FIRST SECRETARY OF PLODIV OKRUG; AND TODOR STOYCEV, FIRST SECRETARY OF VARNA OKRUG, DO NOT SEEM TO MATCH THOSE DISMISSED AS FAR AS EXPERTISE IS CONCERNED. AS 4TH JULY RECEPTION MLADENOVS SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE AS MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND IF THIS HOLDS FOR THE OTHERS, IT WILL BE A SHIFT IN THE ROLE OF CANDIDATE MEMBERSHIP. IN FACT, ANOTHER HIGH RANKING BULGAR OFFICIAL SAID CANDIDATE MEMBERS ARE NOW TO FUNCTION AS "CONSULTANTS". THIS TYPE OF ROLE WOULD BE PLEASING TO THE PLODIV AND VARNA LEADERSHIPS WHICH HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE EFFECTIVE VOICES IN SOFIA.
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CERTAINLY THE MILITARY WILL BE PLEASED IN HAVING THEIR MAN IN COURT IN ADDITION TO VELCHEV.

5. PANAYOTOV'S DISMISSAL COMES AS AN UNEXPLAINABLE SURPRISE. HE HAS NOT BEEN IN HIS POSITION LONG AND WAS TAGGED AS A COMER.

6. POLITBURO CHANGES WERE DISCUSSED WITH SEVERAL RANKING

BULGARIAN OFFICIALS AT FOURTH RECEPTION. ALL ASSURED CHANGES WOULD NOT AFFECT BULGARIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH US. ONE OFFICIAL EVEN SUGGESTED GREATER IMPROVEMENT IN THESE RELATIONS WOULD RESULT. CLAIMED FOREIGN OFFICE WOULD BE STRONGER FOR HAVING MLADENOV INCLUDED IN HIGHEST CIRCLES. ALSO MAINTAINED THAT PERSONS DISMISSED SIMPLY WERE NOT DOING THEIR JOBS WELL AND CHANGE WAS LONG OVERDUE AND NECESSARY.

7. ON INCREASING TOTAL POLITBURO BY TWO, EXPLANATION WAS INCREASED WORK LOAD. WHEN IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT LILOV HAS USED STRONG LANGUAGE IN PAST IN DISCUSSING IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL SYSTEMS, BULGAR OFFICIAL SAID THERE IS DISAGREEMENT IN THIS AREA AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE. SAID WESTERN PROPAGANDA IS POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE, AND SOCIALIST CAMP HAS LAGGED BEHIND AND CONSEQUENTLY MUST IMPROVE.

8. TO US IT SEEMS VELCHEV AND OTHER NATIONALISTS, IF THAT IS WHAT HE IS, HAVE LOST SOME GROUND TO THE INTER-NATIONALISTS, A MANTLE ZHIVKOV HAS TAKEN ON INCREASINGLY OF LATE. (BY INTERNATIONAL WE MEAN MORE FAITHFUL TO SOVIET DOMINATED COMMUNISM BUT ALSO PROMOTING BULGARIAN INTEREST WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK.) WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY SUDDEN CHANGES TO EMERGE FROM THESE PERSONNEL SHIFTS NOR DO WE QUESTION GENERAL STABILITY OF BULGARIAN LEADERSHIP.
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